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Trade and Development Board
Trade and Development Commission
Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development
Third session
Geneva, 11–13 May 2015
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Provisional agenda and annotations

I. Provisional agenda

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4. Adoption of the report of the meeting

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

Item 1
Election of officers

1. It is recommended that the expert meeting elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

Item 2
Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

2. The provisional agenda for the expert meeting is reproduced in section I above. A detailed programme will be available one week before the meeting.

Documentation

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Item 3
Services, development and trade: The regulatory and institutional dimension

3. The multi-year expert meeting is held in accordance with the decision of the Trade and Development Board at its fifty-sixth executive session on 3–4 December 2012. The objective of the expert meeting is to identify best-fit practices at the levels of policymaking, regulations, institutions and trade negotiations that link services, development and trade in a balanced manner, including strengthening regulation of national services. This objective will be pursued through an exchange of experiences and lessons learned so as to assist developing countries, particularly least developed countries and countries with economies in transition, to establish and strengthen regulatory and institutional frameworks and cooperative mechanisms with a view to enhancing their services supply and trade capacity, and the efficiency and competitiveness of the services sector.

4. To address the regulatory and institutional dimensions in the development of the services sector, including infrastructure services, the session will build on the discussions undertaken and the recommendations made during the past multi-year expert meetings (between 2009 and 2012), as well as in the first and second sessions of the current Multi-Year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development. The session will seek to examine possible elements for the preparation of a toolkit consisting of a set of best-fit practices, from which developing countries could extract information applicable to these countries and their circumstances that could assist them in enhancing efficient and effective regulations and institutions. This would potentiate the role of their services economy and services trade as an enabler of sustainable development goals in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

5. Services sectors are in fact essential to the efficient functioning of all economies and strengthened productive capabilities and competitiveness. The quality of policies, regulations and institutional frameworks is the key determinant of services performance, and strongly matters in harnessing benefits from the development of the services sector. Devising adequate regulatory and institutional frameworks that are best fit to national circumstances and priorities is a critical challenge for Governments. This process should start with an assessment of services sector performance, and the regulatory and institutional frameworks conditioning such performance. UNCTAD Services Policy Reviews have provided useful toolkits to assist countries in meeting this challenge and in devising an appropriate policy mix to improve services sector performance, export diversification and structural transformation. Lessons can be learned from country experiences that lead to the identification of best-fit practices and enable the economic activities of services and related trade to be harnessed with a view to sustainable development.

6. To facilitate discussion, the UNCTAD secretariat has prepared an issues note. In addition, experts are encouraged to prepare case studies on the subject under discussion. These papers will be made available at the meeting in the form and language in which they are received.

Documentation

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Item 4
Adoption of the report of the meeting

7. The report of the expert meeting will be submitted to the Trade and Development Commission at its next session. The expert meeting may wish to authorize the Rapporteur, under the authority of the Chair, to prepare the final report after the conclusion of the meeting.

Input from experts

Experts nominated by member States are encouraged to submit brief papers (approximately 5–12 pages) as contributions to the work of the meeting. The papers will be made available at the meeting in the form and language in which they are received. They should be submitted to the UNCTAD secretariat in advance of the meeting, and addressed to Ms. Mina Mashayekhi and Mr. Aurangzeb Butt, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; fax: +41 22 917 0044; e-mail: mina.mashayekhi@unctad.org and aurangzeb.butt@unctad.org.